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Sacramento, CA

# Lambda Letters Project

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[www.humboldt1.com/~mamurphy/lambdaletters](http://www.humboldt1.com/~mamurphy/lambdaletters)

[LambdaLP@aol.com](mailto:LambdaLP@aol.com)

(916) 965-6851

## Calling Congress Toll-Free

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Lambda Letters recently discovered a toll-free number you can use to call Congress. Just dial (800) 972-3524 and ask the operator to connect you with the office of your U.S. senator or representative. This number appears on page 2 each month. Use it whenever you want to express an opinion to your federal legislators.

If you don't know who represents you in the U.S. House of Representatives, call your county registrar of voters office. They will tell you who represents you in Congress, as well as the state legislature. You can also ask us.

For the next few months, you can look forward to a "telephone activism" article in each issue. The article includes a brief description of some issue or legislation being considered in Congress. We hope you will use the 800 number to call your Congressman. Sometimes we may ask you to call the office of a member of a Congressional committee concerning a bill assigned to that committee. Please be a part of the solution and make good use of the free number to Congress. Look for this month's "Telephone Activism" article right next to this article.

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### Telephone Activism

## Phone in for Special Postage Stamp

For this month's telephone activism, call (800) 972-3524 and ask the operator to connect you to the office of Representative Dan Burton, Chair of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. Once you have been connected to his office, tell the person who answers the phone that you would like to leave a message for Representative Burton. The message should be along the lines of, "I urge you to assure that the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee immediately approves H.R. 407, The Breast Cancer Research Act."

This act was introduced by Representative Vic Fazio (D-Woodland). The bill directs the Post Office to issue a special 33-cent postage stamp which people can purchase to support breast cancer research. The extra penny from each stamp sold would go to support breast cancer research. It is estimated that \$300 million could be raised for breast cancer research in this way.

Send us the pink response card you receive from us to let us know that you called Congress. That will help us measure the effectiveness of this effort.

## Lambda Letters Progress Report

### Letters Collected

February, 1997	2,507 letters
In all of 1997	4,788 letters

### Dollars Spent

February, 1997	\$1,466
In all of 1997	\$3,785

### Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.



# Lambda Letters Project

## Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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Mary Ann Murphy, Eureka, (707) 444-2775

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## Staff

### Administrator:

Boyce Hinman, (916) 965-6851, [lambdalp@aol.com](mailto:lambdalp@aol.com)

### Newsletter Editor:

Stefan Grünwedel, (415) 655-3154, [sgrunwedel@idgbooks.com](mailto:sgrunwedel@idgbooks.com)

### Legislative Analyst, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issues:

Hilary Cook, (619) 260-0561, [hcook@earthlink.net](mailto:hcook@earthlink.net)

### Legislative Analyst, HIV/AIDS Status Issues:

Katharine Holland, (916) 451-3469, [katharine@cahf.mailport.com](mailto:katharine@cahf.mailport.com)

### Legislative Analyst, People of Color Issues:

Odell Berry, (510) 569-0938

### Legislative Analyst, Women's Issues: *Vacant*

### Database Manager:

Charles Penn, (916) 663-4951, [rfdk12a@prodigy.com](mailto:rfdk12a@prodigy.com)

Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization.

## Confidentiality

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the Lambda Letters Project Inc.,

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

## Advertising Rates

Business-card sized ads (3½" x 2") \$10 per issue,  
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\*These cities share an office.

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Santa Barbara (805-963-1438)

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Ask to speak to your Representative.

## Change of Address Form

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## Wilson Urged to Prevent Loss of Local HIV/AIDS Funding

By Katharine Holland

In this year's state budget proposal, Governor Wilson identified a nearly \$12 million increase in HIV/AIDS funding for California. While this increased funding proposal is appreciated, there is a problem with how Wilson plans to raise the money. He has proposed that local Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMAs) contribute some of the federal funds they receive to the state's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) for a total of \$12.9 million.

ADAP comprises state and federal dollars, and the funds are distributed statewide. Additional crucial dollars are also distributed by the federal government to fund EMAs that have been especially impacted by HIV/AIDS, such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Orange County. The additional money supplies needed housing, transportation, case management, mental health counseling, and outpatient care for people with HIV/AIDS. Wilson could ask for the donation of federal funds back to the state pool of funding, but this should not be mandatory.

In addition to the efforts of the Lambda Letters Project and other HIV/AIDS legislative advocates, Assemblywoman Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) has introduced A.B. 967, which would prevent the state from taking any local HIV/AIDS funding this year or in the future. A.B. 967 is a backup measure in case Wilson does not rescind his proposal. Migden is also Assembly Appropriations Chair this year and plans to work on the state budget bill to remove the proposal, if necessary.

By signing the enclosed letter to Governor Wilson, you will contribute to the effort to ensure that local HIV/AIDS funding remains intact.

*Lavender  
Valentines*

Let us know when  
your anniversary occurs!

## Support Complete Breast Cancer Care

By Boyce Hinman

Many insurance companies and health maintenance organizations pay for mastectomies (removal of one or both breasts) to treat breast cancer, but refuse coverage for reconstructive surgery to correct the mutilation left by them. These providers say that reconstructive surgery is merely cosmetic—and they do not cover cosmetic procedures.

Congressmember Anna Eshoo (D-Palo Alto) has introduced H.R. 164, the Reconstructive Breast Surgery Benefits Act, to remedy this situation. H.R. 164 requires all providers now paying for mastectomies to pay for reconstructive surgery as well. The bill also prohibits insurers from denying a woman eligibility, or continued eligibility for coverage, solely to avoid paying for breast reconstruction. The bill also prohibits insurers from offering payments or rebates to women who agree to forego coverage for reconstructive surgery. Finally, the bill prohibits insurance companies from penalizing attending physicians who offer reconstructive surgery to their patients who have mastectomies.

This bill is very important. In 1995, 85,000 women had mastectomies. A survey of the surgeons providing these operations found that 84 percent of the doctors had as many as 10 patients whose insurance companies denied them coverage for reconstructive surgery after the mastectomy. The cost of reconstructive surgery can range anywhere from \$10,000–40,000 depending on what procedure is used. For most people, paying this bill privately is out of the question. The disfigurement resulting from a mastec-

*Continued on page 7*

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## No "Defense" Needed

By Hilary Cook

Bills A.B. 800 and S.B. 911, both called the California Defense of Marriage Act, are identical measures designed to prevent California from recognizing same-sex marriages, should they become legal in any other state. This month's letter focuses on A.B. 800 because it is due to go before the Assembly Judiciary Committee at the end of this month.

The bill brazenly lists what it calls "substantial and compelling" state interests that "support the statutory recognition of marriage only between one man and one woman." These interests include the bearing and rearing of children "within a marital setting in a single home with a mother and a father"; the strengthening of the "already threatened" institution of marriage rather than the "further undermining" of it by allowing "any consenting association of persons regardless of gender or number" to marry; and the protection of the state's treasury from the cost of additional spousal benefits.

The blinded outlook of the drafters of this bill could not be more obvious. They prefer to ignore the well-being of the children we will raise in the context of same-sex relationships, regardless of whether marriage is an option. They have no qualms about alienating divorced and other single parents—as well as gays, lesbians, and bisexuals—because they don't see them as their constituency.

A.B. 800 treats marriage as a fragile institution, which on the one hand can never have too many members, and on the other hand must be protected from outsiders, a combination prison and members-only club.

*Continued on page 7*

*Marybeth Webster* Ph. D.

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## Helping Schools, Not Punishing Them

By Odell Berry

A.B. 37, the Academic Warranty Program Act of 1997, introduced by Brooks Firestone (R-Santa Barbara), is an ill-conceived and cynical proposal to remedy the problem of remedial education in our public universities and colleges.

This legislation would allow the University of California, the California State University, and California Community Colleges to demand repayment from local school districts for the cost of providing remedial instruction to their former pupils who fail English and math proficiency tests. School districts unable to remit these claims immediately would fall into a debtor status that would give the State Comptroller authority to reduce their annual allocations by the amount of the claims.

The expense of maintaining remedial programs to bring first-year college students up to minimal entrance standards is understandably exasperating to college educators and administrators. The fact that these programs are necessary at all indicates that our high schools are not instilling basic academic skills in even the most ambitious of our children—namely, those who otherwise qualify for college admission. However, the strategy proposed in A.B. 37—to harass local school districts with financial duress—does not begin to address the real problem. Our public schools are notoriously under-funded. California ranks somewhere around 40 among the 50 states in per-pupil spending. How do we dare expect better performance from local school districts by threatening to reduce budgets that are already insufficient?

Poor inner-city school districts that serve the minority and immigrant students who are most likely to need remedial instruction during their first year of college will become less, not more, capable of providing quality education if this bill passes. We must focus our teaching and administrative resources better in our primary and secondary schools so that all our college-bound students are better prepared to start their college careers on solid footing. Please write to your assemblyperson and demand that this bill be defeated.



# Dignity for All Students

On March 19 the Assembly Higher Education Committee approved A.B. 101, the Dignity For All Students Bill. The bill was introduced by Sheila Kuehl (D-Encino), the first out lesbian elected to the California Legislature.

A.B. 101 would add "sexual orientation" to all sections of the State Education Code that prohibit discrimination. It would require schools to take an active role in preventing harassment of lesbian and gay students by their classmates, as well as prohibit teachers from using derogatory language in discussing lesbians or gays. It's a good bill.

The members of the Higher Education Committee, and how they voted, are as follows:

Name	Party-District	Vote
Dick Ackerman	R-Fullerton	No
Roy Ashburn	R-Bakersfield	No
Steve Baldwin	R-La Mesa	No
Debra Bowen	D-Torrance	Yes
Louis Caldera	D-Los Angeles	Yes
Dennis Cardoza	D-Turlock	No
Jim Cuneen	R-Campbell	Yes
Brooks Firestone	R-Santa Barbara	No
Sally Havice	D-Artesia	No
Fred Keeley	D-Santa Cruz	Yes
Wally Knox	D-Los Angeles	Yes
Sheila Kuehl	D-Encino	Yes
Steven Kuykendall	R-Long Beach	Abstain
Ted Lempert	D-Palo Alto	Yes
Jack Scott	D-Pasadena	Yes

If you live in the district of any of these legislators, please consider sending them a short note expressing your approval or dismay at their vote on A.B. 101. Your note can be addressed to them at:

Legislator's Name  
California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Send the note direct to your legislator or enclose it with your letters to us and we will deliver it for you.

A.B. 101 now goes to the Assembly Education Committee. It affects both California's state colleges and universities (under the jurisdiction of the Assembly Higher Education Committee) and California's public grade schools and high schools (under the jurisdiction of the Assembly Education Committee). In March, Lambda Letters' members sent 642 letters to the chair of the Assembly Education Committee, urging her to assure that her committee promptly approves A.B. 101. We will stay on top of the bill for you.

**Silence is the virtue of fools.**

— Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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## Logo Design Contest Announced

The Yolo County Gay Pride Day Committee is sponsoring a logo design contest in connection with its second annual Pride Day event. They want to create a memorable logo for the event. The logo will appear on T-shirts, flyers, and other promotional materials. The Pride Day Committee invites any interested person to submit a proposed logo design. The winner will be recognized at the event and will receive a free T-shirt. All entries must include the name of the event (LesBiGay Day), the date of the event (June 1, 1997), and the event location (Davis, CA). Deadline for submitting proposed logos is Monday, April 14, at 5 P.M. For further details, contact Shelly Bailes or Ellen Pontac at (916) 753-8283 or e-mail them at [shelly@tellis.org](mailto:shelly@tellis.org).

## Join the Letter Stuffers!

Each month a team of volunteers gathers to prepare the monthly mailings received by our members. Usually this occurs on the first Thursday of the month and is done at the offices of OutSourcing Management in Sacramento. Owner Sandy Virago has been kind enough to let us use her office for several years.

### Hot News!

**Sacramento Quick Print**  
has closed the retail location on J Street, but continues to be a proud supporter of the Lambda Letters Project.

Joanne Moore,  
printing consultant  
(916) 442-5615 voice mail  
(916) 442-6891 fax

Generally we gather at 7 P.M. and work until about 8:30 or 9 P.M. Refreshments and a door prize are provided and we generally have a good time working together. It is a very sociable gathering. If you live in the greater Sacramento area, and would like to help us prepare our mailings, please send us a note with your letters or call us at (916) 965-6851.

## Analyst Needed

We need a volunteer with good writing skills—and access to a computer and the Internet (desirable, but not required)—to help us prepare monthly articles and letters on women's issues. Volunteers spend about ten hours each month on researching and writing. They also attend a monthly staff meeting—either in Sacramento or by conference call—as well as quarterly board meetings. We provide a travel allowance to attend these meetings. This is a great opportunity for you (or someone you know) to influence the subjects we cover. If interested, please send us a note with your letters, or call us at (916) 965-6851.

## Our Heroes

Terry Sidie, owner of the dance club Faces and Verona Village Resort and Marina (both in Sacramento), has matched for the third year in a row a \$500 donation made to the Project in February. And for two years running, Ray Leber of Sacramento has made the donation that triggers Terry's matching contribution. We owe each of them a deep debt of gratitude for their very generous support of the Project.

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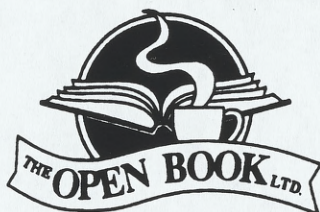


## No "Defense" Needed

*Continued from page 4*

Strangely, the bill seems to suggest that same-sex marriage threatens California with an outbreak of polygamy, perhaps alluding to the myth that bisexuals insist on marrying both a man and a woman!

The suggestion that same-sex marriages will cost the state millions of dollars is unfounded. Studies have shown that the income tax paid by two earners who are married is sharply higher than those same two people filing taxes as individuals. Only when one partner is completely supporting the other is there a tax advantage, a situation that exists in ever fewer opposite-sex, let alone same-sex, couples. It seems likely, therefore, that the state would actually get more income as a result of allowing same-sex marriages. Please help ensure that this bill is defeated. Sign the enclosed letter encouraging a member of the Assembly Judiciary Committee to oppose the California Defense of Marriage bill.



Larry Bailey • Ron Grantz

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## Breast Cancer Care

*Continued from page 3*

tomy results in serious mental trauma for many of the women involved. Tragically, the dread of such trauma and disfigurement probably causes many women to delay treatment beyond the time when less extreme medical procedures might have stopped the cancer.

A.B. 164 has been assigned to the House Committee on Commerce and also to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. We ask that you write to the California representative shown on the enclosed sample letter. This legislator is on one of the two committees to which the bill has been assigned.

Support a woman's right to receive complete breast cancer care. Please write in support of H.R. 164.

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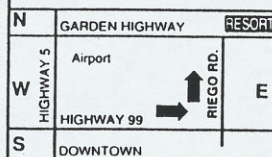
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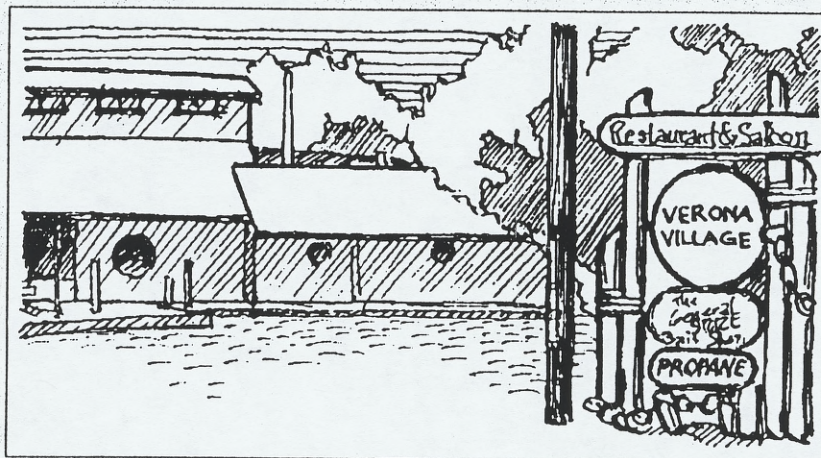


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